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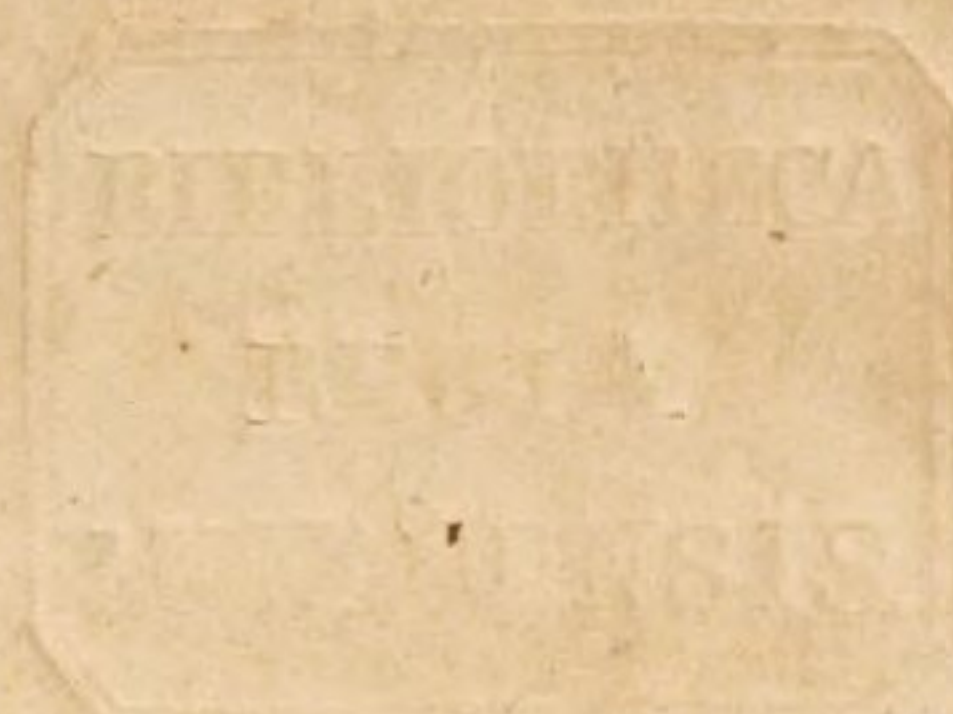
A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE REV. WILLIAM MARSH,

Vicar of St. Peter's, Colchester.

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THE HON. WILLIAM B. HARRIS
CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF
INDIAN AFFAIRS

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A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE REV. WILLIAM MARSH,

Vicar of St. Peter's, Colchester,

ON

THE NATURE AND TENDENCY

OF

CERTAIN RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

FREQUENTLY, BUT IMPROPERLY, DENOMINATED

Evangelical.

BY THE REV. E. J. BURROW, A.M.

MINISTER OF HAMPSTEAD CHAPEL, AND LATE FELLOW OF MAGDALEN
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

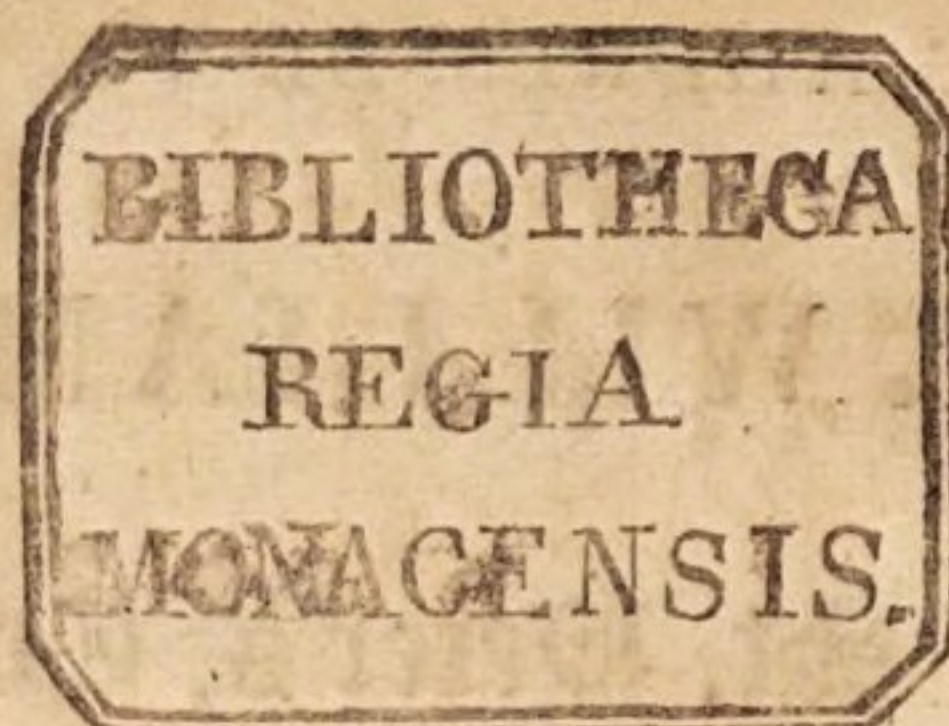
PUBLISHED BY F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND

NO. 3, WATERLOO PLACE.

1819.

409. 65.



Printed by Richard and Arthur Taylor, Shoe-Lane.

A LETTER,

&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

FINDING yourself addressed by an humble individual, known to you only by his name, you will naturally ask, what could constitute his motive and object in thus making a public appeal to your piety and justice upon the solemn subject of your ministerial functions. That I am a clergyman of the Church of England, and that my character, in the discharge of the sacred duties imposed upon me by episcopal ordination, is open to inquiry through channels to which you have free access, will, I trust, afford me a sufficient title in your eyes to such a hearing, at least, as may seem due to a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard.

I most sincerely disavow, at the very threshold, any one expression, which, for want of sufficient perspicuity, may be interpreted into an infringement of that true courtesy, which rests on sounder principles than worldly maxims, and which is especially re-

quired, by every religious and civil obligation, in all intercourse which takes place between those who serve at the same altar.

My *motive* and *object*, then, in the following pages, I will endeavour briefly to explain ; and however impotent may be my attempts to effect the one, I trust that I shall stand justified, both by yourself and all who most differ from me, with regard to the purity of the other.

I have, Sir, through life been accustomed to regard and to treat with respect the appearance of eminent piety and virtue, for piety and virtue's sake. That very different principles may lead to the same good end, if they draw not in an opposite direction, has always been readily acknowledged by me ; and is, indeed, as obvious, as that various paths, however circuitous, may ultimately tend to one common centre.

Among the professors of Christianity, those who, within the pale of our Church, have considered themselves as in some respects distinguished from the majority of its members, have appeared to me entitled to peculiar consideration : and, as I have for some years been foiled in my attempts to investigate rigidly the principles upon which the assumed distinction rested, I have willingly yielded them the humble tribute of my general approbation ; without, however, choosing to enlist myself

under banners, the armorial bearing of which was placed upon too high a staff for close inspection.

That I have at times doubted of the validity of principles, which were productive of effects to which I shall have occasion to refer hereafter, will not be attributed by you to a defect of Christian charity : for, limited as are our perception and knowledge of the human heart, we can argue only from the effect upwards to the cause. It was, then, with a feeling of much more than idle curiosity, or a desire to exercise an absurd hypercritical propensity, which I should deprecate in another, that I availed myself of an opportunity, last summer, to listen within the walls of St. Peter's Church to the words of a preacher who is looked upon as placed in a singularly eminent and therefore responsible situation ; as the leader—may I say it without offence—of a considerable *party*.

From your own mouth, Sir, was I in hopes of deriving the information which should dispel or confirm my doubts. That in such a hope I should meet with entire disappointment, will rather be a source of wonder to others than to yourself : in fact, it happened that no one point was discussed in your two sermons, on the day of my presence at St. Peter's, which could throw the smallest light upon the question at issue in my mind.

This mortification, instead of subduing my earn-

est desire to be made master of a subject indisputably important, naturally, perhaps, excited my determination not to rest any longer in doubt, if it were possible to avoid it. Conversation with some excellent and well-informed persons supplied me with a clue ; observation, with some facts ; and fortuitous circumstances which seemed providentially to occur, and which it was impossible for me to anticipate, with the fullest illustration both of the *nature* and *tendency* of those doctrines and practices which are denominated, at Colchester, *evangelical*. I do not feel myself called upon to declare thus publicly the personal authority which is placed within my reach ; because, *you* will have no great difficulty in appropriating the allusion ; and still less, I am convinced, in acknowledging the respectability and authenticity of the source from whence my information is derived. In addition to this weight of evidence, I have now before me that which is unquestionable, as far as it respects the principles and doctrines publicly and privately avowed and inculcated by yourself ;—I mean, two tracts ; the one entitled “ Questions and Answers on the Catechism of the Church of England, adapted to the Capacities of Children, with short Exhortations and Scripture Proofs, by the Rev. William Marsh, A. M. Vicar of St. Peter’s Colchester ;” the other, a MS. designated “ Plain Reasons for Nonconformity to the

World," copies of which, written and given, as I understand, by yourself, without any restriction of confidence, have been circulated among those who were to be made proselytes or to be confirmed in *evangelical* principles. Upon these latter documents I rest my present strictures on THE NATURE of such principles: and from reasonable deduction and analogy, supported by the declared opinions of the wisest and most learned of our Church, together with the still less questionable testimony of facts passing under your own immediate knowledge:—from these fair and solid grounds of argument would I endeavour to prove the TENDENCY of the tenets, which are, I believe, assumed by your congregation to be exclusively consistent with true Christianity.

I need scarcely, after these preliminary observations, state my *motive* to be an anxious wish, that not only myself, but those who are in the habit of attending your ministrations and of being influenced by your advice, should be put in possession of "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Then may those who adhere to your directions dispassionately judge for themselves, whether, in doing so, they be or be not consistent members of the Church of England; and whether they be justified in professing doctrines which lead to such results as those which have fallen under my cognisance.

My *object* will be evident; namely, to remove a

reproach from myself, and those who think with me, of a very serious nature ; and to lay before the readers of this Letter such a body of evidence, with respect to the opinions of the Reformers and Founders of our Church, as shall at least prove that our Establishment does not hold, or even tolerate, such doctrines ; and, therefore, that the supporters of them are in the most essential points dissenters from that Church, the majority of whose members they pronounce to be *not evangelical* as themselves ; or, in other words, not promulgators and exemplars of pure Christian spirit. If I be successful in establishing these fundamental truths, you will, I trust, consider me amply excused for making the most serious and affectionate entreaty to all who may be wavering upon these vital subjects, to declare honestly and openly, whether they be or be not content to embrace the system which you espouse, with all its consequences ; or to shield their faith, when their judgement is convinced, under the ægis of the mild and conciliatory genius of our venerable and apostolic branch of Christ's universal church.

Upon taking into my hand your " Plain Reasons for Nonconformity to the World," it at once struck me, as indeed it would have occurred to any unprejudiced person, that the whole weight of your reasoning, being drawn entirely from the text of Scripture, must rest upon the one solitary ques-

tion, of just interpretation ; or, in other words, if the texts which you adduced in support of your opinions were properly applied and interpreted, that you must be right. On the other hand, if these texts were inapplicable to the subject, and incapable of the interpretation you adopted, consistently with the context, and the avowed spirit of the Gospel, that all the superstructure you had raised upon them must fall, inevitably, to the ground.

And here, Sir, I must solicit your pardon, if, in the course of my argument, I should appear to depreciate your theological knowledge, and to blame your use of Scripture. You will perceive that I am compelled in some degree to do both ; but believe me, it is with great unwillingness, with every feeling of personal respect, and in submission to such authority as is far elevated above any opinion, that I can, for an instant, consider as my own. Under these impressions I proceed to consider *generally*, the mode of interpretation which has been sanctioned by the collective wisdom of many ages ; and then, to try those texts, which stand in the front of your reasons for nonconformity, by this acknowledged standard.

It were, indeed, presumption in me to usurp the teacher's seat, and place you before it. When I speak of the rules of interpretation to you, I rather call on you to bear witness to the *correctness* of my

assertions, for the edification of those who may not have studied so deeply, as you must long ago have done, the very elements of our profession.

It will be admitted in the first place,—That *one* text of Holy Writ rightly understood, and judiciously applied, is infinitely more valuable than any number of texts furnished by the Concordance, on the jingle of the word, without conformity and palpable application in the precept or idea conveyed.

Secondly. That a doctrine must be fully deducible from the whole, and not from a part only of a sentence, paragraph, or subject matter.

Thirdly. That in the investigation of the sense of any passage, we must not consider in how many ways it *may* be understood; and apply either of them, as is convenient; but we must seek the sense in which the utterer, or writer, *intended* it to be received.

Fourthly. That the only method of arriving at this right understanding, according to the intention of the author, is to consider the time, place, and circumstances, under which he spoke, or wrote.

Fifthly. That these incidental circumstances, which must previously be known, are to be found generally in the context; and therefore that no passage can be supposed rightly interpreted, the sense of which is at variance with the context.

Sixthly. That as the words of Scripture will sometimes admit of more than one sense,—such as

a literal, an allegorical, a typical, or a parabolical sense,—it is essential to ascertain which of these is adapted to the object of our inquiry.

Seventhly. That to ascertain which is the true sense, we must recollect, that the most simple one is always the most probably true; and therefore to be preferred to a figurative, unless necessity compel it,—such necessity, as the inconsistency of the literal sense with the plain doctrines of the Gospel, with propriety, or common reason.

I am aware that in this brief enumeration many technical rules for arriving at the truth have been omitted; but so many are retained, I trust, as will open the minds of young hearers to the necessity of close and accurate investigation, before they trust their decision upon such important matters to the influence of their ears.

I shall add but one or two more remarks, which may prove useful:—An indiscriminate use of the text of Scripture must be productive of the most pernicious effects, because it teaches people to fill their minds with words rather than ideas; and to substitute the former for the latter. That this is the case precisely in proportion as the individual is ignorant and uneducated, I could readily, if necessary, produce you examples from your own flock. How cautious then ought the minister of Christ, —the appointed interpreter of the inspired volume,

—how cautious ought *he* to be, lest by teaching the people to apply familiarly to the *words only* of Scripture on all occasions, he furnish them with arms which, in heedless awkwardness, they may turn against both friend and foe!

If there be a safe and sure path to tread, it is doubtless that which is pointed out by the *analogy* of Scripture. In illustrating the Bible by itself; in pointing out the precise meaning of a word, as determined by the author's use of it in another place, by comparing the parallel passages, and showing that one simple and uniform idea pervades them all,—consists, as I apprehend, one, if not the very first, duty of the Christian teacher. The harmony of Scripture arises from the nature of its origin, the inspiration of the Spirit. To this test we may therefore securely bring any passage of questionable meaning. But, perhaps, the most abundant source of false and dangerous interpretation, is the supposing a mere verbal, to be a *real* analogy.—The first is highly useful in ascertaining the force of words, but goes no further. Passages are not (if I may use the expression) *spiritually* parallel, unless the resemblance obtain in the meaning of them; and, in this case, that which is most clear, is to be most relied on;—for an uncertain phrase cannot be explained by one still more so.

Having the foregoing canons of interpretation

impressed upon my mind, and feeling assured that no one could deny their intrinsic value, who duly considers the immense responsibility which rests on him who undertakes to expound the phraseology of Scripture,—what was my surprise at finding that John xvii. ver. 16, was the passage chosen as the text or foundation of the whole doctrine of *nonconformity with the world*; that is,—if I understand rightly the scope and subsequent explanation of the “Plain Reasons,”—a total abstraction from all society, but that which holds the same modification of religious principles; and an entire abjuration of all those amusements which are denominated usually, and I think justly, *innocent* amusements,—of all the pleasures of social life, whether in excess or moderation! That I am not putting a false construction upon your expression of “nonconformity to the world,” the whole of your “Reasons,” and the boasted practice of those who abide by them will amply testify. Assuming, then, that I am right in this respect at least, I shall endeavour to prove that the text of St. John above alluded to, cannot in any manner, even by implication, be applied to Christians of the present day; nor indeed to any but those of whom our blessed Saviour exclusively and directly spoke.

I shall then show that your interpretation of the term “world” in the other passages which you

quote, in the preceptive division of your subject, is not fairly deducible from Scripture; that it is inconsistent with the analogy of faith, and unsupported by the opinions of the wisest and most pious commentators and divines.

If I establish my belief that these texts do not authorize any such construction as yours, it will not be necessary to pursue the argument through the several others of which you afterwards incidentally make use. For it will not be denied, that when once an interpretation is confirmed by the scope and tenor of the Gospel, and by the manifest sense of one or two clear passages, others of questionable meaning, however numerous, cannot invalidate the testimony.

Now St. John in the xviith chapter of his Gospel is recording our blessed Lord's address to his heavenly Father, at the 6th verse, in these words: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Of *these men* it is obvious our Lord thus continues: "I pray for them; I pray not for the world." And who were they for whom he prayed? "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." Does not this sufficiently determine that the prayer, thus far at least, was offered on behalf of the twelve Apostles, from whose number Judas "by transgression fell, that he might go to his

own place?" Still he says *of the same persons*: "I have given *them* thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." He adds emphatically: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them *out of the world*, but that thou shouldest keep them *from the evil*." At the 20th verse he concludes his prayer for sanctification of the Apostles: "Neither pray I for these alone, &c." By the plainest grammatical construction the pronouns 'these,' 'they,' and 'them,' agree with the one antecedent substantive 'the men,' the apostles, of whom our Saviour spoke. That Christians in after times cannot be included, is evident from the 18th verse: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so *have* I also sent them into the world,"—for the purpose of preaching the doctrine of the covenant of grace. Dr. Whitby paraphrases the 9th verse thus: "These things which follow *respecting only my apostles*, which are to preach my Gospel to all nations, I request not for that world which hath no knowledge of me." Dr. Macknight, on the same place, says with equal precision: "The persons here prayed for are not good men in general, in opposition to the bad *who are often called the world*; but those good men in particular who were given to Jesus by the Father to be his Apostles; and who by that office were distinguished from the rest of his disciples." It

were surely needless to accumulate opinions upon a point which will hardly be contested, that our blessed Saviour, in this text, which you have placed at the head of your “Plain Reasons for Nonconformity to the World,” referred *solely* to the twelve Apostles; and therefore that the *general* use to which you have applied it, is not supported by the laws of biblical criticism, or the authority of biblical writers.

As the whole force of your arguments, I again repeat, must depend upon the signification of the word “world,” I proceed to the other passages from Scripture which you suppose to condemn all pleasure and amusement, but that which is derived from religious occupation. You say, “St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, having first laid the foundation of Christian doctrine, exhorts to the raising the superstructure of Christian practice thus: ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.’—‘Love not the world,’ saith St. John, ‘neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not

of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' With such plain exhortations," you say, "so evidently designed for the direction of believers in all ages, may we not with propriety call upon the Church in the language of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;—for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth, with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'" I cannot but advert here to the extreme *impropriety* of applying a call addressed to the Greek Christians to separate from the heathens and idolators by whom they were surrounded, to Christians of the present day in communication only with those, who, however unworthy of the name they bear, have, according to the words of our baptismal office, been made "regenerate

and grafted into the body of Christ's church." If this be not an application of words without reference to the intended meaning of the author, it would be difficult to allege an instance of such opposition to the rules of just interpretation.

But to go back to the signification of the word "world." That the term is expressive of the *amusements* of the world in your first text, John xvii. ver. 16, will hardly be contended; since the Apostles were not likely, from the peculiarity of their distinguished station, after they were called and dedicated to their office, and from their previous poverty, to be affected by any such temptations. We know, too, that "the world" who hated them, could not consist of those who listened to their preaching, but of those, both Jews and Gentiles, who opposed it. The verbal parallelism of the two last-cited texts will, I think, furnish us with all the information we can desire. Upon Romans xii. ver. 2, Dr. Macknight makes this paraphrase: "'Be not fashioned like to this world.'" (See a particular account of the manners of the heathen world, Ephes. iv. ver. 17 and 19.) The meaning is, Christians in their character and manners should not resemble those who spend their time in gratifying their bodily appetites, and who justify themselves in their practices by maintaining atheistical and other corrupt principles. 'The world' here signifies the corrupt part of the world: see

1 John ii. ver. 16. on which passage, '*Love not the world,*'" he adds, "As the Apostle distinguishes the world from the things which are in the world, it is probable that by the world he means the wicked men of the world, and by the things of the world, the bad principles and corrupt dispositions belonging to the men of the world. '*For all that is in the world.*' Here, as in the preceding verse, the world signifies the men of the world. In this sense also our Lord uses the word *world*, John xv. ver. 19. So likewise St. Paul, Romans xii. ver. 2."

"Hence the evil one is called, John xii. ver. 31. the prince of the world; and Ephesians ii. ver. 2. Wherefore in the passage under consideration, the world is that collection of idolators, unbelievers, and wicked men, which compose the great bulk of the inhabitants of the world. '*The lust of the flesh*'—Those fleshly appetites which may be termed sinful when unlawfully indulged, or sensuality. '*The lust of the eye*'—An inordinate passion for magnificence in houses, in furniture, equipage, dress, which, because it is gratified by the eye, may fitly be called the lust of the eye. '*The pride of life*'—The things pertaining to this life of which the men of the world boast, and by which their pride is gratified; such as titles, offices, lands, noble birth, and whose efficacy to puff up men with pride and to make them insolent is not of God. '*Is not of the Father, but*

is of the world. The Father hath stored this earth with objects suited to the natural desires which he hath implanted in men's minds, and the enjoyment of these objects is innocent, provided they are used in moderation. But inordinate desires, called by the Apostle lusts, and their power to tempt men, proceed from the wicked themselves, through indulging their lusts without restraint."

I have taken the liberty to transcribe at large this comment of an unquestionably wise and pious writer, because it would be impossible to put my own thoughts and conviction on the subject into more forcible and explicit language. I would refer those, who may wish for further confirmation of this opinion, to Dr. Doddridge's exposition of the passage*, where it

* Family Expositor on 1 John ii. 15—17. "And now whatever your age, station, and circumstances may be, suffer me to address to you one word of exhortation; which is this, 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world'—in an *irregular* and *excessive* manner; for 'if any one love the world' with too great an attachment, and have his heart chiefly set on its interests, or its pleasures, it may be justly inferred, that 'the love of the Father is not in him;' for there is a real inconsistency between the love of the world in this sense, and that of God: which will easily appear, when we consider what we may justly understand by the world; 'for all that is in the world,' when it comes to make up the largest catalogue of good things, which it can promise to those who eagerly and idolatrously pursue it, is to be comprehended under these three well known particulars: 'the lust of the flesh,' that is, the pleasurable indulgence of our carnal appetites; 'and the lust of the eyes,' that is, the acquisition of money, which if not expended

will, at any rate, be seen that the opinion of the best interpreters is conformable with what I most conscientiously believe to be the spirit of the Gospel. They believe, it is plain, that such things do exist as *innocent* pleasures and amusements; and that these acquire guilt only in the excess, or when they so attach the mind to earthly, as to detach it from heavenly things. They believe that a cheerful enjoyment of social happiness, and an active employment of those mental faculties which are given to us for improvement, for expansion, and for the increase of our stock of rational pursuits, are compatible, nay are necessary effects of that pure, pervading spirit of religion, which elevates our eyes to the works of nature, and, while we contemplate the mighty wonders of the

for other purposes for which it is designed, only serves us to behold and count over; 'and the pride of life,' some ambitious pursuits, in consequence of which we may make a parade in the eyes of our fellow creatures for a little while, in our way to the grave, which is to strip us of all. Now it is evident that these things, considered as the food of luxury, avarice, and ambition, 'are not of the Father, but of the world.'" It plainly appears, that God considered as the author of all good, cannot be pleased with such affections and pursuits; and it would be profane to suppose that they are produced or excited by him, or that the prevalence of them can be acknowledged by him as consistent with his love in the heart. In a note Dr. Doddridge adds on verse 15—"In an irregular and excessive degree—It is plainly necessary to attend to such a limitation; for otherwise there is a degree of love to worldly enjoyments which is rational, and which we must have for them, or we cannot in a proper manner attend to the duties of life."

Creator of the Universe, teaches us to feel and to adore with tenfold energy that mightiest of all works, the Redemption of our Souls.

The *nature* of the doctrine of nonconformity with the world,—in your acceptation of the terms, compared with the reasonable interpretation of those terms by rules as much opposed to a lax accumulation of inapplicable words, as to a preconceived and false analogy of faith,—having been considered as briefly as the subject would permit, I have only to point out, as it appears to me, the almost necessary, but certainly highly probable, *tendency* of such tenets.

The first effect to be deprecated I assume from your own position, that under these principles you may *with propriety* look upon our fellow-christians as heathens and idolators, if they do not act and think, in all respects, according to the same principles with yourself. The next effect is of a far more serious, because a more positively injurious nature, subversive of every social tie, of every domestic charity; and ultimately productive of the most awful consequences. I speak now to facts; and I hesitate not to affirm, that the most flagrant dereliction of social duties, the most unqualified breach of the fifth commandment, the most earnest solicitations to quit every thing that is near and dear to a virtuous and truly religious man, have been justified by the assertion that a

literal obedience is due to such calls, as those which you have used from St. Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

I affirm, too, that by those who are professors of the same opinions, the text Matt. x. 34. has been urged in a strict verbal acceptation, in order to countenance actions, which would disgrace man unblessed with revelation, and wandering in the dim twilight of natural religion : yet the veriest tyro in theology full well knows, that these words are descriptive of the shocking effects of *human depravity* which should ensue during the promulgation of the Gospel, *notwithstanding* that Gospel is the Gospel of Peace, and proceeds from the Prince of Peace.

Shall we, Sir, be told that the Minister of God, the herald of good tidings to fallen man, knew not, or falsely delivered, the triumphant message with which he was intrusted? Shall we learn that “Glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will towards men,” are promoted by disobedience to the divine commands, by separating the sacred bonds of affection and relationship, by spiritual pride, and a desire to render foes those of our own household?—No, Sir! It is impossible that such doctrines, so interpreted, can ever have proceeded from an English Pulpit; but still, if the precise meaning of such passages, involving the best interests of social life, be not plainly and *explicitly* declared, they may and will be wrested to the very worst of purposes.

Minds excited by strong religious sentiments, or of a weak and plastic nature, may misunderstand and miserably misapply the insulated texts, which taught the first disciples to “come out” from the corruptions of heathenism and infidelity. Shall we believe that the one unextinguished spark of primæval innocence,—that which was cherished, nay consecrated, by pagans and idolators—that *filial piety* was destined to be quenched by the hands of those Christians whose characteristic principle is universal love? You will disavow with horror the very idea of such effects proceeding from any thing which can have passed from your lips or pen; but I entreat you by every thing that is valuable in social or religious intercourse, to look carefully, whether through ignorance, or something worse, the sacred pages have not been sometimes so perverted, among those who submit to your advice and influence*.

* I cannot avoid directing the attention of those into whose hands these remarks may fall, to Matt. xv. 3—20, and the parallel passages, in which a most beautiful and lucid illustration of two main points before us, the true nature of filial obedience, and the origin and catalogue of those things which only “defile a man,” is recorded by the Evangelist as it proceeded from the gracious lips of “the Author and Finisher of our Faith.”

Upon the former part of this passage Dr. Doddridge makes this improvement: “Let children learn, from the command which Christ has vindicated, to honour their parents by a tender care of

Need I pursue my course through the remainder of your *preceptive* reasons for nonconformity?—If called upon, I am prepared to do so. But my object being only to show that the doctrine of separation from any thing but the *wicked world*, from vicious or immoderate pleasures, is not the explicit nor even implied doctrine of the Gospel, I am willing to rest here my cause, on this portion of my subject; and to consider, next, the “*examples*” which you adduce for our imitation in this respect.

You say “The Holy Spirit teaches us the same line of conduct, by leaving upon record for our imitation the practice of holy men of old.”—The first instance you give, is that of Moses refusing “to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing

them in their declining years; remembering that as no filial duty and gratitude can ever fully repay our obligations to such friends, so an affectionate regard to them is a proper and necessary expression of our filial piety to the great Father of our spirits. Justly may he esteem his temples profaned, rather than adorned, by the most costly gifts, which are the spoils of nature and the trophies of inhumanity.”—And upon the latter part he remarks, “Let those who are employed to guide others, be especially solicitous to know and pursue the right way themselves, lest, instead of saving themselves, and those that hear them, they both of them at last perish together. We are in danger of it if, like these Pharisees, we inculcate on our hearers a zeal for the circumstantials and appendages of religion, while its essentials are neglected; and perhaps some of the greatest enormities of the mind are consecrated under an honourable name, and profanely listed under the banner of the God of holiness and love.”

rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Now, I would ask, Is there the smallest parallelism between the two cases? Had Moses separated himself from his own kindred, and refused communion with the congregation of Israel, because they would not listen to his counsel, as the accredited agent of their Almighty Leader, then indeed might we derive some benefit from the example ; but it is expressly stated, that it was on account of sin, *Egyptian* sin, the corruption of an idolator's court, that he refused to belong to the family of those who persecuted his own nation to the last extreme of ignominy.—Upon the character of David, who is next brought forward, it will be sufficient to observe, that with respect to his general conduct, he not only partook of the innocent entertainments, and even luxurious pomp, attendant on his rank and dignity, to which he seems to have been more than ordinarily attached ; but that he fell into the grossest and most flagitious vices of which man is capable. We are, then, to learn from his example, humility—deep humility, when we reflect that he who was eminently and indeed *exemplarily* devoted to the service of his God, was still liable to, and unable to withstand, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:" his repentance too, though often short-lived, was earnest even to agony ; and in all

his wanderings his soul seems still to have clung to that gracious Being who accepted his contrition and healed his soul. But not one word is there to impress us with an idea, that he avoided the amusements becoming his high station, still less that he banished from his presence all who partook of them. You afford ample proof of this, by citing his determination not to remain subject to the defilement of the idolatrous Arabian tribes of Meseck and Kedar. Had he said "Woe is me, that I am constrained, as the ruler of Israel, to dwell with those who rebel against the Most High, in suffering any pleasure to occupy their minds but incessant praise and prayer to Him who has chosen them from other nations, and are therefore unworthy to be called his people;"—then we might perceive some resemblance, and argue justly to absolute Christian abstraction from all that is passing in the world.

In the next and most important instance, I do indeed hold with your position, that "Conformity with Christ is the aim of every Christian" (supposing that you mean, *is*, or *ought to be*). Let us see how far we have it in our power, and therefore how far it is required of us, to "follow his steps who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," as it respects our present question.

What, and where, was the first miracle which Jesus wrought?—*Changing water into wine at a*

marriage feast. Is this circumstance recorded for our imitation, or not? The miraculous part we *cannot* imitate, but the other part we may: and from the whole circumstance we may derive a most valuable inference. Would our blessed Lord have converted water into wine to promote inebriety, at his first public appearance in the world? No—but to promote hilarity and social mirth, which, even in his august presence, before the incarnate God, were esteemed by Himself allowable and to be encouraged. Did *he* devote the wedding-day to an exposition of awful truths; did he take this opportunity to restrain the innocent gaiety of a festive party, *for our instruction*? Had he done so, would the inspired Evangelist have omitted so momentous an admonition? No.—Even He, whose sole object upon earth was to save men from the power and guilt of sin, and to tread the path which they must tread, considered that at the very moment of his first assuming the divine prerogative, he was well employed in proving that an acquiescence in the customs, and an encouragement of the temperate pleasures of social life, were by no means inconsistent with the purity of his law. Can we find any where that his words and actions contradict this first public act of his ministerial life?

I then am “wicked and ignorant enough” (according to your phraseology) “to suppose that Jesus

Christ did follow" (in one instance at least) "the amusements of the age in which he lived upon earth," *notwithstanding* his anointed spotless character, to which we, alas! can scarcely discover in ourselves one tittle of resemblance.

What is the inference to be drawn from the recital of this early proof of the tendency of our blessed Lord's example, and consequently of his precepts, which must be in unison? Surely, the object of the rule of living which he exemplified and enforced, was not to abstract men from the common intercourse of the world, nor to withdraw them on any account, but for the most cogent reasons, such as idolatry and contagious infidelity, from the sphere in which a wise Providence should place them; not to encourage a vain pharisaical opposition to the habits and customs of social life, so long as they were not positively vicious; nor to inculcate a total renunciation of *innocent* pleasures and amusements, so long as they are soberly and moderately sought. I am, indeed, much deceived in the general purport of the "Sermon on the Mount," and of every precept which relates to our conduct here, if it do not teach that our main business is to cleanse the heart, the source of evil, from all impurity and pollution; that thus we may be enabled to associate even with the *wicked*, if necessary in the course of our temporal calling, without suffering from the contagion of

their principles and manners* ;—that we are carefully to free from all stain the moral lens through which external objects are refracted on our mind, so that the rays may fall colourless and pure upon the retina of our soul. Objects in themselves beautiful and pleasing, if viewed through an irregular and clouded medium, become deformed and hideous. So it is with the spiritual man : if the mind be perverted and corrupt, whatever is presented to it will partake of its perverse and corrupted nature : but we are not therefore, on the one hand, to shut our eyes in order to avoid the physical defects of vision ; or on the other, to seclude ourselves in a convent for fear of meeting with occasional temptations and objectionable companions in the progress of our probationary course.

While I am on the subject of interpretation and example, I would beg your permission to remark, that the principles against which I am contending would seem to come with little grace either from your mouth or mine. We, Sir, are blessed with families, which, together with the purest delight, must occasion us some solicitude and care. If we turn to 1 Corinthians vii. 32. we find St. Paul thus seriously admonishing : “ I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for

* See Matt. xv. 18, 19.

the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord ; but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife." If the plain words of a text, without reference to the tenor of the Gospel, be admitted as conclusive, I need not point to the necessary inference ; or to the inconsistency of *our* conduct with the recommendation of the Apostle, to remain unmarried, "that we may attend upon the Lord without distraction ;" and to the necessity also of setting a better example to our respective flocks.—The only remaining method of exculpation on this score will be to follow the *literal* injunction of another text, which I am inclined to think we should as little conceive to be our duty, as a rigid adherence to St. Paul's, namely—"Take therefore *no* thought for the morrow."

If I have been able to show that the *precepts* which you adduce for "nonconformity with the *world*," according to your interpretation of the word, fall far short of establishing any such principles, as really Evangelical, or *belonging to the Gospel*; if I have shown that the *examples*, which you offer, are either totally inapplicable to Christians in the present day, or, in the one authoritative instance of our divine Redeemer, lead absolutely to a very different conviction;—if I have fortunately been able to rouse the mind of any one, especially among the younger

and less experienced of your followers, to a rigid investigation, according to acknowledged rules, of the Sacred Text ;—if I have demonstrated to them, how insufficient, and how dangerous, is the method too much indulged, of stringing passages together without reference to their intended sense, and concomitant circumstances ;—if I have been thus far successful,—my avowed object is accomplished ; and it were a mere waste of your time and mine, to consider your further ideas of the “tendency,” and “arguments” on the nature of the subject before us. These latter, it is evident, must stand or fall by the same judgement as the former division of “Precept and Example ;” for, if your premises be proved defective, your conclusion will be incontrovertibly erroneous.

Here, Sir, would I gladly conclude my letter, which has already extended much beyond the limits I proposed when I first took my pen in hand ; but having trusted myself thus far, I cannot, must not, stop till I have stated all the grounds of apprehension which I have felt, with regard to the diffusion of certain principles ; and all the effects which accident and careful observation have convinced me, are the legitimate and frequent, though not the invariable, consequences of those principles.

In the consideration of these points I would en-

treat your patience. I still candidly confess my hope, that my address to *you* may, in some measure, be influential on *others*, whose ideas are yet fluctuating with regard to the terms of salvation proposed and elucidated in the pages of the New Testament.

I believe that I should have taken it for granted, upon strong presumptive testimony, that your tenets, as explained to those immediately around you, though not publicly and explicitly avowed, are Calvinistic; but the authority before me is decisive upon one point at least, and to that one I shall confine myself.

Some, if not all, of those who have been considered as holding the same doctrines with yourself, communicated and enforced by your instruction, do declare their adherence to Calvinistic doctrines; and, what is a little hard to be endured in silence, affirm them to be the doctrines of the Church of England; asserting, at the same time, that those clergymen who do not agree in, and teach the same, are not preachers of the GOSPEL, and are thus excluded from the confidence of "true believers," of "Evangelical Christians."

The one point, then, which I hesitate not to assume as your doctrine, is the separation of Regeneration from the Sacrament of Baptism, the belief that this Sacrament does not convey imme-

diately to the child baptized that especial grace by which he is born again, and made, *ipso facto*, “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven;” but rather, that regeneration takes place at some subsequent indefinite period in the individual’s life,—if, indeed, it take place at all, which must depend upon the absolute will of the Almighty, and eternal election of the subject.

In the course of my reflections upon the *nature* of these doctrines, I shall endeavour, First, briefly to show, that the question is a fundamental one; because it necessarily involves all the other Calvinistic articles; and Secondly, to remove the charge, that this is the doctrine of our Church, or, in other words, of those Scriptures from whence the doctrines of our Church, without any exception, are all derived.

It will then be my business to prove the *tendency*, to deduce theoretically the probable consequences of such opinions; and finally to bring to light the actual effects which do every day ensue from them, according to the degree of zeal and the constitutional habits of the persons by whom they are espoused.

There is a term much in use, and a more imposing one cannot be conceived, which is calculated to mislead the heart, and blind the understanding,

of those who are most seriously inclined to “ worship God in the beauty of holiness :” I mean the phrase, *moderate Calvinism* ; by which it is insinuated, that the doctrines of subsequent regeneration, of election, and of final perseverance, are admitted, to the exclusion of those revolting tenets, the absolute reprobation of a certain number of mankind, and their predestination to eternal misery.

Many tender and truly pious minds would tremble to suppose it possible, that they could for an instant cherish the idea of a God, infinite in justice and in mercy, devoting the larger proportion of his helpless creatures to perdition ; though they might cling to the hope, that they themselves had been selected from their fellows, as the vessels of grace and divine favour. That many thus influenced, do stand upon the brink of a frightful precipice, down which the overpowering force of Calvinistic principles is ready, any moment, to hurl their heedless minds,—that many know not the bearing of the course into which they have been conducted blindfold,—is a truth evidenced by hundreds every day. The weak, but affectionate, hand of a feeble child may arrest such persons in their progress ; and point to the obvious danger ; when the strength and vigour of a Samson shall not avail to draw them from the depth from whence there seems no egress or return. With such hope before

me, and in reliance solely on the justice of my cause, I now proceed to show that the doctrine of Regeneration, interpreted according to your mode, is of fundamental import, as it involves every other Calvinistic principle.

I think I need not remind *you*, Sir, though probably many of your hearers are not aware of this, that we have the best authority for asserting, that there is no such thing in existence as *moderate Calvinism*. That the concatenation of Calvin's *chain* is entire in all its parts,—that tenet is linked indissolubly to tenet,—let Calvin himself bear witness. What then does he say of the Sacrament of Baptism? “It remains therefore from the promises given in Baptism, we endeavour to deduce its nature and meaning. The Scripture shows that the first thing *represented* in it, is the remission and purgation of sins which we obtain in the blood of Christ; and the second, the mortification of the flesh, which consists in the participation of his death, by which *the faithful* are regenerated to newness of life, and so into communion with him. This is the sum to which we may refer every thing delivered in the Scriptures concerning Baptism, except that it is also a sign by which we testify our religion before men.” Of the Baptism of Children he speaks thus: “It remains for us briefly to show what advantage results from this *ceremony*, both to

the *faithful* who present their children to be baptized, and to the infants themselves who are washed in the holy water.”—“The children also receive *some* advantage from their baptism, their ingraftment into the body of the Church being a more peculiar recommendation of them to the other members; and afterwards, when they grow to years of maturity, it operates upon them as a powerful stimulus to a serious attention to the worship of God, by whom they were accepted as his children, by the solemn symbol of adoption, before they were capable of knowing Him as their Father.” It is obvious to remark, that the Reformer speaks here in both instances only of the *faithful*, by which he means the Elect alone*, and their children; but denies that Regeneration, even to them, is the immediate effect of Baptism, still less that it is so in the case of those who are not elect. He confines the nature of the ceremony (for, strictly speaking, it is with him no sacrament) to its symbolic *representation*. This being Calvin’s acknowledged doctrine, allow me to show, how far on this point yours will coincide, as I collect it from your writings. Early in your “Plain Reasons,” you use this expression: “We imbibe from education an histori-

* “We now hear, that it was given us from Heaven that we should believe in Christ; because, before the origin of the world, we were ordained to faith, as well as elected to the inheritance of eternal life.”

cal faith in the Scriptures, and so learn to reject the idolatry of the Heathen, and the avowed infidelity of the Jew; but till we derive divine light and life from the Holy Spirit, we are as dead in trespasses and sins, and as destitute of the power of real godliness, as the unconverted were in ages past."

In your exposition of the *Church Catechism*, your questions and answers are framed with the same end in view*. The coincidence is manifest in this respect between Calvin and yourself, that

* Q. What should our Christian name teach us?

A. That we should follow Christ.

Q. Who are members of Christ?

A. All true believers.

Q. Who takes care of the Church?

A. Christ.

Q. What has he ordained for her benefit?

A. Two Sacraments.

Q. What do they teach us?

A. Our depravity and guilt.

Q. Of what use are they?

A. They are means of grace, and pledges of his love.

Q. Of what is Baptism a *sign*?

A. Of an inward and spiritual grace.

Q. Is the outward sign of Baptism sufficient alone?

A. No.

Q. What must we experience?

A. A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.

Q. What are we *then* called?

A. Children of grace.

Q. How is this shown?

A. By repentance and faith.

both deny the actual regeneration which we suppose to take place at the time of baptism, and that both suppose a person not to be in a state of salvation till that regeneration shall have been effected. Now for the next link. "Therefore," says Calvin, "as God *regenerates for ever the elect alone* with incorruptible seed, that the seed of life planted in their hearts may never perish: so he only *seals in them* the grace of his adoption, that it may be firm, and ratified."

In another place he adds, "Many indeed, as if they wished to repel odium from God, so acknowledge election, that they deny that any one is reprobated; but too ignorantly and childishly, since election itself would not stand, unless opposed to reprobation. God is said to separate those whom he adopts to salvation: it would be folly to say that others gain by chance, or acquire by their own industry, that which election alone confers upon a few. Those therefore whom God passes over he reprobates; and for no other reason except that he chooses to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates to his sons." "You are greatly deceived if you think the eternal counsels of God can be so separated, that he elected some men to salvation, and destined none to destruction. For if he elected *some*, it certainly follows that *all* are not elected. Moreover what shall be said of these lat-

ter, except that they are left to themselves to perish? Therefore there must be a mutual relation between the reprobate, and the elect."—Volumes of quotation or of argument could not decide more peremptorily than these two paragraphs, upon the utter impossibility of separating election from reprobation. The would-be moderate Calvinist has indeed a hard master, who will accept of no service but an entire sacrifice of the judgement, and an annihilation of the most amiable feelings of which the human heart is capable. Of the doctrine of reprobation, thus proved by an unanswerable witness to be inseparably connected with election, and through election, with the regeneration of the elected few subsequent to baptism,—of this doctrine, let Calvin himself declare his sentiments. "I confess that it is a horrible decree." "It is a false dogma, and contrary to the word of God, that God so either chooses or reprobates as he foresees that every one will be worthy or unworthy of his grace." "It is a *frivolous reply* of our adversaries that God does not wholly reject the objects of his long suffering, but remains in suspense towards them, awaiting the possibility of their repentance*." "That the reprobate obey not the word of God when made

* Compare Rom. ii. 4, 5. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

known to them, is justly imputed to the wickedness and depravity of their hearts, provided it be at the same time stated that they are abandoned to their depravity, because they have been raised up by a just but inscrutable judgement of God, *to display his glory in their condemnation**.”

There can be no necessity for multiplying passages to demonstrate, that the whole fabric of Calvinism is so riveted together, that no favourite parts can be detached without involving the whole in ruin. I may be allowed, here, to affirm my own perfect conviction, that it is supported only by sophistic arguments, founded upon bold and unauthorized assertions: it is not my present object, however, to contend against its principles, but to show that they must be avowed, or disavowed, *in toto*.

I subjoin, in an appendix, from the “Refutation of Calvinism,” by the Bishop of Lincoln, the Lambeth Articles as they are denominated, framed in 1595, and those prepared by the Synod of Dort, in order that such persons as may chance to see these remarks, may judge for themselves of the true nature of the doctrines which follow so closely and necessarily on the denial of baptismal regeneration.

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Regeneration, according to the Calvinistical interpretation, is confounded with “a renewing, or renovation, of the mind,” with “mortification,” with “conversion,” all of which must take place after the individual has arrived at years of discretion and responsibility; and is the portion of the called and elect alone; whereas, Regeneration according to the use made of it in our Liturgy and offices, if we may believe the plainest expressions of which our language is capable, is confined to that NEW BIRTH, which is “the inward and spiritual grace” conveyed by the sacrament of Baptism. Are not our Catechism and baptismal office sufficiently explicit on this head? How, Sir, I would ask, can you, in the exercise of one of the most solemn functions of the ministerial office, standing before the font which contains the consecrated emblem of purity and sanctification, “yield hearty thanks to our most merciful Father, that it hath pleased him to *regenerate* the infant,” whom you had just before baptized, in the name of the adorable Trinity, “with his Holy Spirit, to receive him for his own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into his holy Church?” How, I would ask, can you, Sir, consistently and conscientiously thus address the Omniscient, while you are persuaded that the child before you is *not regenerate*, *may never* become “the child of God,” and is incorporated *only* into

the *visible* Church of Christ, to the privileges of which, if he be not already elected, no subsequent repentance, faith, or obedience, ever can entitle him *? Our services are no less consistent than sublime; and if a term be thus defined in a single instance, it were needless labour to look for any corroborative expressions. I shall mention, therefore, but one instance more of its occurrence. In the collect for Christmas day, we pray thus to Almighty God: "Grant that we being *regenerate* and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit." Now, there is but one way in which I can conceive a minister holding Calvinistic principles, to apply the word *we*, and that is, as referring to the elect alone. And shall we be told, that the Liturgy was not intended for *all* professing Christians,—sinners, as well as saints? Shall you and I, Sir, dare thus at the very opening of the morning service to adjure the congregation, "I pray and beseech you *as many as are here present*, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace?" Shall we dare thus solemnly to call them to unite in a general confession; and, according to the rubric, in the other forms of prayer and praise; and then mock them by the assurance, that unless

* "Hence we collect that holiness, innocence, and whatever virtue there be in Man, is the fruit of election."—Calvin.

they can show a sign of a divine call, and regeneration, according to irreversible election, they are totally unconcerned, absolutely rejected from any benefit of public worship?—How shall the people answer “Amen,” to prayers in which they can bear no part?

In the administration, too, of the other Sacrament, I can hardly help supposing, but that you have seen and felt the difficulty which must arise from the exclusive nature of the doctrine we are considering. My suspicion on this subject is in some degree confirmed by the practice which, I understand, is adopted at St. Peter's, of administering the elements, indeed, separately to each communicant, but of repeating the prayer before delivery of the bread or cup, but once for each time that the rail is filled. Now by this, I am aware, one main obstacle is removed; because, by not *specifically* applying to every individual the words “The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given *for thee*,” and “The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which *was shed for thee*,” you leave the matter altogether undetermined with respect to the party's capability of being benefited by the sacred rite. You allow each person to decide for themselves, according to their own assurance of their regeneration. I am well convinced that this mode, which, if pursued by a “Worldly Minister,” (to use a phrase to which

your ears are not unaccustomed), would be esteemed a sinful neglect of due propriety, cannot arise from any such cause with you. I must, therefore, attribute it to the only motive which occurs to me, as providing for some appearance of consistency. Yet I would hint, that the rubric is not easily evaded, “That the Minister shall deliver the Communion *to the people also in order, into their hands, all meekly kneeling. And when he delivereth the bread to any one, he shall say ‘The body’*” &c.

Can principles belong to our Established Church which require an abolition of her rubrics, to render her services consistent with her tenets? Is this Church, for which I have *heard* you express so much veneration and attachment, indefinite in her terms, at variance with herself, setting up one part of her services against another, and her rules against her doctrines? At least before I admit that such is a true picture of her ecclesiastical condition, I would refer to the best authority I can find, that of the formers of her Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy; and of those who are acknowledged to have written with most success upon her polity.

In the first copy of the Articles, framed in 1536, we read thus on the Sacrament of baptism: “Infants must needs be christened, because they be born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted; which cannot be done but by the Sacrament

of Baptism, *whereby they receive the Holy Ghost*, which exerciseth his grace and efficacy in them, and cleanseth and purifieth them from sin, by his most secret virtues and operation." "The promise of God adjoined to the said Sacrament" is thus explained, "that is to say, that in and by this said Sacrament which they (adults) shall receive, God the Father giveth unto them, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, remission of all their sins, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, whereby they be *newly regenerated*, and made the very children of God."

Archbishop Cranmer in his "Necessary Erudition of any Christian Man," edited 1543, discussing the doctrine of faith, has this remark: "It is to be noted that all promises of God made to man after the fall of Adam for Christ's sake be made under this condition, that man should believe in God, and with the grace of God given, for Christ, endeavour himself to accomplish God's commandments. The Church, therefore, intending that man should always have in mind how the promises of God be made *upon condition*, (and without keeping of the condition, no man is partaker of God's promises,) hath taught and ordained, that men before they receive baptism shall promise and covenant to fulfil the said condition; and to forsake the Devil, and the World, and to serve only God." He adds what was his meaning of the term *faithful*, so often

improperly applied in the present day, “ And of this especial covenant whereby man bindeth himself to God, he is called in Latin *fidelis*, *faithful*, and he that never made the same covenant, or after he hath made it, renounceth and refuseth the same, is called among Christian men, *infidelis*, *unfaithful*, a heathen.” The “ Short Catechism*,” containing a summary of Christian discipline, &c. runs thus: “ What does baptism represent or set before our eyes? That we are *born again* of the spirit of Christ, and cleansed from sin, &c.”

Article XXVIII, of 1552, agreeing nearly with our Article XXVII†, is similarly expressed. “ Bap-

* Commonly called Edward the Sixth's Catechism, and entitled “ Catechismus brevis Christianæ disciplinæ summam continens omnibus ludimagistris autoritate regia commendatus. Huic Catechismo adjuncti sunt, Articuli de quibus in ultimo Synodo Londinensi, A.D. 1552, ad tollendam opinionum dissensionem, et consensum veræ religionis firmandum inter episcopos et alios eruditos atque pios viros convenerat, &c. 1553.”

† It may not be amiss to annex a word or two from Bishop Burnet's “ Exposition of the XXXIX Articles.”—“ It were a strange perverting the design of these words (Tit. iii. 5.) to say that somewhat spiritual is to be understood by this ‘ washing of Regeneration,’ and not baptism; whereas to the word *save*, that is here ascribed to it, St. Peter gives that undeniably to baptism; and St. Paul elsewhere in two different places makes our baptism to represent *our being dead to sin and buried with Christ*; and our being *risen and quickened with him and made alive unto God*; which are words that do very plainly import regeneration.” “ So that upon the whole matter, baptism is a federal admission into Christianity; in which

tism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign and seal of our *new birth*."

I have made the above extracts as short and as few in number as possible, because I feel assured, that as their authenticity is unquestionable, and the same spirit pervades them, they are sufficient to attest that the framers of our Articles, Catechism, and Liturgy, did not contemplate the doctrine of *regeneration* in the same light with yourself. That our present Catechism is founded upon the "Catechismus brevis," already cited, and put together by the editors of our Articles and Homilies, or under their immediate inspection, is surely a safe criterion

on God's part all the blessings of the Gospel are made over to the baptized: and on the other hand the person baptized takes on him by a solemn profession and vow, to observe and adhere to the whole Christian Religion." "The office for baptizing infants is in the same words with that for persons of riper age; because their parents, who are of age, are considered as in them, and as binding themselves by the vows that they make in their name. Therefore the office carries on the supposition of an internal regeneration; and in that helpless state the infant is offered up, and dedicated to God; and provided that when he comes to age he takes those vows on himself, and lives like a person so in covenant with God, then he shall find the full effects of baptism; and if he dies in that state of incapacity, he being dedicated to God, is certainly accepted of by him; and by being put in the *Second Adam*, all the bad effects of his having descended from the *First Adam*, are quite taken away." (On Article XXVII.)

of the sentiments which it is intended to inculcate. If, therefore, the above extracts, to which hundreds of others might be added in corroboration, be decidedly *anti-calvinistical*, so is the Catechism also.

Now, Sir, permit me to compare *your* Catechism with that of which it is said to be “An explanation.”—In the first place, you ask three questions, which are not found in the Church formulary, before you arrive at an answer “*in italics*,” denoting it to be taken from our Catechism. The first answer, (see note p. 36.) I affirm to be altogether indefinite, unintelligible to a child, and not a quotation from the “exhortation” to which you refer in the margin. Of the second answer, I assert without fear of contradiction, that it is in express hostility to the plain sense of the Catechism, which asks, “Who gave you this (your Christian) name?” and answers, “My Godfathers and Godmothers in my *baptism*; wherein I was made a member of *Christ*, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.” It would appear difficult to evade the force of so plain a statement, and to require some ingenuity to interpret it in any sense, but that which is congruous with the baptismal rite. By omitting, however, both question and answer, and substituting in the room an ad libitum preface, the space is indeed filled up,—but how fitly, I will leave others to determine. You cite Ephes. iv. 30.

This must be a typographical error. I pass on, though leaving much unsaid, to “the Sacraments.” I do not see the relevancy of your first question and answer here, but there can be no objection to them. The answer to your second demand is the truth, indeed, but a part only of the truth; for, surely every ordinance, derived from the authority of Christ, is also for the benefit of the Church; though not “generally necessary to salvation.” The whole object of the question, “How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?” and the reply, which is made, is absolutely lost by your mode of alteration. The next *most important* question and its answer are scarcely to be recognised under their new form. How came it to be omitted, that a Sacrament *means* “an outward and visible sign of an *inward and spiritual* grace given unto us?” You best can tell. Your answer will also explain the omission of the question, “How many parts are there in a Sacrament?” Again, *your* Catechism asks, “Is the outward sign of baptism sufficient *alone*?” It answers, “No.” “What *must* we experience?” The answer is ambidexter. “Who produces this change in us?” The Holy Ghost. “What are we *then* called?” *you* ask. Our Church replies, “The children of grace.” But does she reply to your satisfaction? If so, you would not have placed the emphasis on the word *then*, referring

manifestly to the *period* of the change which is supposed to be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost; and to your belief that *that* period is *not* the moment of our baptism. In fact, this part of your "Questions and Answers" contains an exposition of Calvin's Institutes, and not of our Church Catechism.

All this you will avow without hesitation, because you could not in consistency with your own principles do otherwise; but I will ask, Are those principles consistent with the Catechism, the very manual of our Church, which demand the sacrifice of her most important expressions, and can only be rendered superficially conformable by interpretations and additions in direct contrariety to her plainest language? If the Catechism be such as you approve in all its parts, why alter it? If the Catechism be not a summary of faith and practice, according to the opinion of the Church of England, why use it at all? Can he be a Churchman who cannot abide by her declarations? You have adopted a middle path, which appears to have led into some intricacies and contradictions.

If I have taken up a hasty or an erroneous judgement of the matter, I entreat you to undeceive me; but till my judgement be thus convinced, I cannot but lament from the bottom of my heart, that children, especially those of the poorer ranks, — nay some who belong to a school in union with

“The National Society for the education of the poor in the principles of the established Church,” should so early be taught to throw aside, or to put unintelligible glosses upon, that admirable form of instruction which our Church supplies, in order to render them consistent members of it.

I shall conclude my observations upon the *Nature* of the doctrine of *Regeneration*, as connected with the formularies of our Establishment, by a quotation or two, from an author whose testimony on this point will not, I conceive, be deemed blindly partial, or ignorantly pronounced.

Had I no better ground to stand upon, than the validity of my own opinion, of the comparative insignificance of which I am thoroughly sensible, I would not have ventured to meddle with a question of such vital interest. To exculpate myself, I have, however, only to prove, that the very best authority is on my side*. “The Church is to us that very mother of our New Birth, in whose bowels we are all bred, at whose breasts we all receive nourishment. As many therefore as are apparently to our judgement born of God, they have the seed of their regeneration by the ministry of the Church, which useth to that end and purpose not only the word, but the sacraments, both having generative force

* See Hooker's “Ecclesiastical Polity.”

and virtue.”—“ For we all admire and honour the Holy Sacraments, not respecting so much the service we do unto God in receiving them, as the dignity of that sacred and secret gift which we thereby receive from God.”—“ Grace intended by Sacraments was a cause of the choice, and is a reason of the fitness of the elements themselves.”—“ There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, maketh of any thing what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing.—Or, howsoever such voluntary exercise of wit might be borne with otherwise, yet in places which usually serve, as this doth, concerning Regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost, to be alleged for grounds and principles, less is permitted.”—“ Thirdly, Unless, as the spirit is a necessary inward cause, so water were a necessary outward mean to our regeneration, what construction should we give unto those words wherein we are said to be *new-born*, and that even of Water?”—“ For as we are not naturally men without birth, so neither are we Christian men, in the eye of the Church of God, but by new birth; nor, according to the manifest ordinary course of divine dispensation, new-born, but by that Baptism which both declareth and maketh us Christians.”—

“ In sum, the whole Church is a multitude of believers, all honoured with that title, even hypocrites for their profession’s sake, as well as saints, because of their inward sincere persuasion, and infants, as being in the first degree of their ghostly motion towards the actual habit of faith; the first sort are faithful in the eye of the world; the second, faithful in the sight of God; the last, in the ready direct way to become both, if all things after be suitable to these their present beginnings.”—“ They that can take to themselves, in ordinary talk, a charitable kind of liberty to name men of their own sort, God’s dear children, (notwithstanding the large reign of hypocrisy,) should not, methinks, be so strict and rigorous against the Church for presuming as it doth of a Christian innocent.”—“ The grace which we have by the holy Eucharist doth not begin, but continue life; no man therefore receiveth this sacrament before Baptism, because no dead thing is capable of nourishment. That which groweth, must of necessity first live. If our bodies did not daily waste, food to restore them were a thing superfluous; and it may be that the grace of Baptism would serve to eternal life, were it not that the state of our spiritual being is daily so much hindered and impaired after Baptism.”

Surely this is enough, and more than enough,

to show that one of the most eminently pious and virtuous among our Ecclesiastical writers is decisively opposed to the Calvinistical doctrine of subsequent Regeneration.

I cannot help adopting the eloquent language of Martin Luther, when, speaking of the Deluge being the type of Baptism, he exclaims, "How much wider does Baptism extend, than did the deluge ! for the deluge, which was in the time of Noah, destroyed the men of one age ; but Baptism has endured, since the baptism of Christ, throughout the world, and will continue unto the last day ; *it is a deluge of grace*, as the former was a deluge of wrath."

I am at length arrived at the stage, at which I engaged to point out the *tendency* of the principles denominated *Evangelical*. Before I proceed, let me meet an objection, to the full force of which I am sensibly alive. It is indeed of so prevailing a nature, that it would have imposed absolute silence on me, had not a conviction of duty, founded upon very peculiar circumstances, outweighed the reluctance which this feeling created in my mind. I shall be told, and very truly told, that, notwithstanding the evidence I have adduced, and much more which remains behind, still there have been, and are now, many learned and exemplarily pious

men who cherish and profess the very tenets that I have ventured to arraign.

I am quite willing, nay *anxious*, to acknowledge that some of the most valuable characters are to be found in the Calvinistic church, and among those also who assume the title *Evangelical*. To deny this, were as great folly as presumption. To assert that causes, to a certain degree of a speculative nature, *must*, and *always do*, produce the same practical effects, were to oppose the evidence of reason and experience: but does it follow, that, because these effects are not always produced, the cause has no tendency to produce them? Shall we assume the philosophy of the Heathen for our standard of morality, because a Socrates and an Epictetus led irreproachable and exemplary lives?—because the virtue of the former was in the highest degree heroical, of the latter *almost* Christian? I speak of *principles* which I believe to be erroneous; but of my *fellow-christians* who hold them, with the unfeigned respect which I conceive to be as much their due, as I should hope it might be considered mine. When therefore I have occasion to mention the circumstances which have fallen under my observation, and which I *know* to be the fruits of Evangelical assumptions, I desire to be understood, as not alluding, in the smallest degree, to any

one, in whom such consequences are not discernible.

The *objectionable tendency*, then, of the principles I have combated, appears to be reducible to these three heads :

1. To dissent from the Established Church.
2. To a mistaken exercise of piety.
3. To a defect of christian charity.

This is, Sir, I confess, a grave accusation ; and, if I do not establish it, subjects me to severe rebuke for my imprudence :—whether I do, or not, to much reproach. In the consciousness, however, that no one can justly impute to me an unworthy motive, I go on fearlessly to urge my argument, and to call my witnesses in confirmation.

1. Whether your interpretation of the doctrine of Regeneration be right or wrong, one thing is unquestionable,—that but a very small proportion of the regular clergy, compared with the whole, in this part of the united kingdom, admits its justness. It will, therefore, be preached in comparatively but few Churches. It is, however, the avowed doctrine, in connexion with the other Calvinistic tenets, of a very considerable body of dissenters. In a country like this, in which every modification, whether intelligible or not, of religious sentiment is protected by the legislature, and finds its advocates, a Meeting-house, if not more than one, stands usually within a few paces of the Parish Church ; and there

is too much spirit of free-agency abroad to allow it to be supposed, that the exploded idea of *Schism* should prevent any one from entering its walls who may expect to find congenial spirits there.

When, moreover, persons are systematically taught, that the GOSPEL is not to be heard under the roof of any Church in which the officiating minister does not belong to the Evangelic party, and that *that* only is the true Gospel which proceeds from Evangelic lips ;—when such weighty reasons are reiterated in the ears of conscientious persons, how can they resist the temptation of seeking “ the bread of life ” where alone, they are told, it is to be found ; even though, by so doing, they incur the charge of Schism?

I do not believe that you, Sir, would positively recommend to a parishioner, absenting himself from Colchester, to attend that place of worship, *what-ever* it might be, in which your principles and his prevailed ; but that such a member of your flock, if he had heard you or those about you speak of “ *worldly ministers*,” of men, who, though unexceptionable in their conduct, devout and earnest in their professional concerns, were “ blind,” were “ unregenerate,” were no better “ than the heathens,” having no call, no *vital* Christianity,—that a member of your flock, with these impressions on his mind, should despise the ministry of the Church, and fly for consolation to the conventicle, would surely be no great marvel, would be highly proba-

ble in the exact degree in which the individual was zealous and consistent.

You will say, perhaps, ‘Am I not to preach what I believe to be the truth, even if some bad effects ensue?’ I reply, It is far from my intention to dictate to you what you shall or shall not preach; but it is my object to show, that the first effect of “Evangelical” preaching is a *tendency* to dissent from the Established Church in its present state.

Had our Reformers meant that our Church should have a Calvinistic bias, why should Cranmer have refused the proffered aid of so powerful an ally as Calvin; and in his stead have invited Melancthon to assist in the great work of raising the goodly structure, of which we have so much cause to boast? If this be so, and the fact is notorious, Calvinism, and “Evangelic” principles, so far as they are tinged with it, are *prima facie* not only of dissentient *tendency*, but are in fact dissent. But, alas! it has been lately proved, that these principles lead directly, not only to disagreement with our established Church, but to that species of religious creed, which is, in the minds of most men, to be deprecated beyond all others.

It has been shown, that Calvinism is the parent of Antinomianism. Fearful as are the consequences to be apprehended from the diffusion of such doctrines, still we cannot but respect the consistency

of the men who, having embraced them, openly and honestly secede from communion with a Church, the tenets of which they conceive to be erroneous. That the professors of Evangelical principles, at present within the pale of the Establishment, are generally expected by the principal dissenters to follow the example of the persons above alluded to, is, I believe, generally understood. It is not wonderful, indeed, that such an event should be anticipated, on the same ground of incongruity between the parties, now united under one denomination—that of Church-men.

This, however, you will say, is mere matter of speculation. Let us then appeal to facts. Among those who have been taught by you,—among those who are considered to be under your especial guidance, I, and you, Sir, know, that there are individuals who both in Colchester, and in other places, are in the habit of attending those Churches *only*, in which, according to their definition, the *Gospel* is truly preached: if it unfortunately occur, that the parochial Church is not served according to their ideas of what is Evangelical, these individuals *do* go to any Meeting-house, even if it be that of acknowledged Methodists.

How far your personal advice and influence may have been opposed to such dissent, I pretend not to inquire; but you will admit, that it would be no

very unfair conclusion from the facts, if bystanders should suppose that your objections have not been very strongly urged.

Attachment to the Church will not, at any rate, be publicly avowed as a reason for quitting the regular ministration of her priesthood altogether, or dividing the Sabbath between the Church and the Conventicle: such a plea would be so repugnant to common sense, as to carry its refutation with it. What then is the reason? Not indifference to outward forms, not generalizing sentiments of unlimited toleration:—No, far from it. It is, if I be not egregiously mistaken, a *rigid adherence to Evangelical principles*, which produces the anomaly of which I speak,—that of a person professing the warmest attachment to a Church, while by connivance or example he leads to its desertion.

2. I am, secondly, to substantiate my assertion that “Evangelical principles tend to a mistaken exercise of piety.” What! you will exclaim, can those who have renounced the world with all its pleasures, for the sake of Christ—can they who feel the impress of the Deity’s all-prevailing seal upon their souls,—can they who are convinced that they are so regenerated by the Spirit, so become an integral part of that spiritual body of which Jesus Christ is head, that nothing can separate them from the love of Christ,—can they who live in the assurance of

divine election mistake the true nature of Christian Piety? This sounds plausibly, I admit, and I do not know that the warmest advocates of "Nonconformity," and subsequent regeneration, would adopt other language than this, which I may suppose yourself to use. But, Sir, forgive me if I try these assumptions, by the frigid test of right interpretation and common sense.

If, in the renunciation of the "world," they have cast away, with supercilious contempt, the blessings which a merciful Providence has bestowed *for our enjoyment*, if in this renunciation they have forsaken those who were connected with them by the sacred ties of nature, and, by forgetting the *relative obligations* of their station, have infringed the fifth Commandment,—if all this have been done upon the authority of insulated texts, wrested to a certain purpose, without reference to their consistency with other parts of Scripture,—then, Sir, I maintain, that, to speak in the tenderest way, this is *mistaken piety*. But it is "for the sake of Christ." Well—that every thing should yield to "the one thing needful," and to "the love of Christ," I cordially allow: only be it remembered, that where one of two parties is bound to yield, an *opposition* between them must be pre-supposed. We "cannot serve God and Mammon." We cannot be uniformly influenced in our conduct by respect for the ho-

nour and service of the God of *heaven*, if we devote our whole, or an immoderate share, of our attention to the god of *wealth*. That there is no real opposition between a cheerful and moderate participation in the pleasures of social life, and that implicit obedience to the commandments of God which is a test of our sincere love of Christ, has, I trust, been proved in the former part of this letter. To offer therefore a sacrifice to Christ, which he does not demand, at the price of his plainest precepts, is to cry unto him, "Lord, Lord," but not to do the will of his Father which is in Heaven; and is therefore *mistaken piety*.

Moreover, experience demonstrates daily the truth of the humble aphorism, that "extremes meet;" and this, not only in secular but in religious matters. The neglect of social duties, for instance, may, and often does arise, from want of a proper sense of religious obligation; but it may *also*, and does spring, in numberless instances, from an excessive devotion to religious exercises. How, for one instance, shall a mother or sister of a family be able to fulfil all the engaging and delightful duties of domestic education, of domestic economy, of rendering herself the example and the friend of the younger branches of the household, the pride and partner of a father or a husband; how can she find time for the exercise of that amiable dispo-

sition which the voice of Reason, as well as of Inspiration, proclaims to be an essential requisite of the female character, if her mornings be spent in attending public meetings and committees,—in visiting every house to which she has access, but her own, for the purpose of making converts,—in usurping the ministerial functions, and casting contempt upon our prescribed forms by extemporaneous prayer with the sick and uninformed? Her evenings, perhaps, are occupied in attending Lectures twice or thrice in the week at Church, or in parties formed to listen to expositions of Scripture, and *religious conversation only*. No one can be so foolish, or unjust, as to deny that these employments are among the best fruits of that tender piety which is almost peculiar to, and is the brightest ornament of, a female Christian; so long as she is regulated by a proper knowledge of the bounds within which it is appointed her to move, so long as she do not interfere with that real charity which “*begins at home.*”

Let me now take another instance, in which, through an indiscriminate and exaggerated feeling of religion, those who profess “*Evangelical Principles*” are absolutely deprived of that keen sense of propriety, which would prevail even with an honourable mind, unactuated by the better dictates of the Gospel. Does not the third commandment teach us, that we are not to “*take the name of the*

Lord our God in vain," and, by necessary implication, that we are to abstain from applying all sacred things to trivial purposes? Yet, Sir, have I seen an use made of the text of Scripture, which would shock a much less pious mind than yours. Can you believe that it is a custom, and not an uncommon one, with certain persons, to have seals engraven with references and quotations from the Bible; and that letters thus sealed are exposed to the derision of the profligate and thoughtless, in the common post bag, or the kitchens through which they may chance to pass? You must allow that such a perversion of what ought religiously to be kept from unhallowed touch, is not defensible on any principles but those of *mistaken piety*.

I shall advert to but one other abuse of Scripture, which is equally prohibited by the same commandment, I mean the interlarding of familiar conversation with Scriptural phraseology, and appeals to the sublime truths of Christianity.

I will not trouble you with any further illustrations of that most important truth, that *zeal without knowledge* is highly dangerous in its tendency; because it blinds the eyes of the understanding, and teaches people to suppose that they are acting upon the best of motives, while in fact they are sapping the foundation upon which those motives rest. By injudiciously pursuing a certain line of conduct,

for the love of Christ, they may be looked upon as warnings that his “yoke is” *not* “easy,” that his “burden is” *not* “light,” and may draw licentious ridicule upon his holy Name.

With regard to the internal conviction which is assumed as the proof of Regeneration, I shall have something to say in the next division of my subject. I would, therefore, here only hint, that “the heart” of man “is deceitful above all things;” that we are prone to “deceive ourselves” in the most unimportant matters, still more in those of highest import.

I pretend not to know what is deemed the precise token of divine Regeneration subsequent to Baptism: But this I know, that judging from my own heart and conscience, I have constant need of that renewal of the Spirit for which the Liturgy teaches me to pray, and without which I am assured I shall not attain to eternal life. I am persuaded that salvation, purchased by the blood of the Lamb of God, is freely offered to me, as well as to all other sinners, in that covenant of grace into which God, of his own mercy and for the merits of Christ, has entered with fallen man. I trust, and it is the main anchor of my soul, that if I endeavour to perform to the best of my ability *those conditions* upon which the provisional promise of eternal happiness depends, these my endeavours,

however imperfect, will meet with acceptance through the mediation of Jesus Christ, if they be sincere, and founded on the only proper, the only constraining motive,—that love and faith in Him which is manifested by obedience to his commands, as a tree is known by its fruits. This trust in the sure *mercies* of my God, I would not barter for *any* indefinable, perhaps visionary, feelings of absolute election, or regeneration distinct from the grace of Baptism, by which, it is possible, my own heart might rashly delude itself into a blind and groundless assurance of salvation.

Does it not sometimes occur in an awful form to the “Evangelic” mind, that Calvin himself admitted, that the same appearances were often to be found in the regenerate and unregenerate ; nay, that the inward conviction was sometimes the same ; but that in the latter case it was utterly delusive, and exempted not from a state of condemnation,—the subject being still reprobate in the sight of God ? With this doubt hovering round the heart, from which I will defy any rational and humble man to say he is absolutely free, how shall we dare to rest our confidence upon any staff, but that of entire submission and active obedience to the will of God, for Christ’s sake, in the improvement of *all* the talents intrusted to our care ? Perhaps you may be able to inform me of that which I cannot

find in the sense of Scripture, though I might so in its words,—of that unequivocal testimony of regeneration, which, as you suppose it to be confined to a very few, might hold out some shadow of excuse to those who possess it, for leaving the remainder of the world to take care of themselves, and to withdraw from all society but that of the elect. Till, however, this touchstone be accurately analyzed, I cannot but consider such unnatural conduct as *mistaken piety*.

3. The “defect of Christian charity,” to which I have good reason to suppose “Evangelic” principles have an immediate tendency, may be considered, as it affects—those who never have adopted these tenets,—those who have done so, but who may see cause to relinquish their connexion with the party professing them,—and lastly, as it regards the clergy of the Establishment, who constituting a large majority in the Church, conscientiously believe that the pure and essential doctrines of the Gospel are to be preached without “Evangelic” or Calvinistic interpretation.

It shall be my endeavour, while touching upon this point, to abstain from any inference or assertion, which might justly draw down upon myself the imputation of that very breach of charity, against which I contend in others.

To you then, Sir, as being well qualified to an-

swer them, I would address a few queries with respect to the tone of feeling and practical effects which are actually produced by those principles of which I have been speaking. Is it not, Sir, the general, if not uniform, belief of those who attend St. Peter's Church, that salvation is only to be found according to the mode of faith and practice which is there inculcated? Is it not considered that all who do not embrace that mode are unregenerate; for that all who are regenerate must necessarily do so? Regeneration according to your system, is not a *precept* but a *mean of salvation*, and *must* therefore be previously received. How, then, will any individual of your congregation think of those who differ from him? Surely as of persons who are in a state of reprobation, and, being condemned by an eternal decree to everlasting destruction, are unfit for the "communion of the faithful." The most charitable view in which he can contemplate them, is, that they *may* be elect, but are not yet regenerate; that they *may* be enlightened, but are yet in a condition of judicial blindness: this is the only ground upon which he can consistently attempt their conversion;—as is done every day in violation of all the ties of friendship, decency, and honour. You, not I, Sir, will determine whether in the proselyting spirit which distinguishes the "Evangelic" advocates, a desire of increasing the strength and

numbers of a party, a longing-after that influence which is attached to successful exertions in a contested cause, or an anticipation of rendering the Church conformable to their opinions, rather than their opinions to the Church—does not sometimes usurp the place of that pure disinterested love of Christ, which would oblige them “to love one another, even as he had loved them,” and thus prove themselves to be indeed his “disciples.” How can they consistently with their tenets love those “*as brethren*” whom God has rejected, who are in their eyes “as dead in trespasses and sins, as heathens, and idolaters?” Christ “came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance;”—and shall a Christian Minister affirm, that those who are already united with the visible Church of Christ, who *do* believe in his meritorious sacrifice, and who hope for pardon of their sins through him alone, are yet unregenerated by the sanctifying Spirit, are as *dead* as those in whom the vital spark of Christianity never has been kindled? Surely, Christian charity were but an empty name, if it could tolerate such principles as these. Are we to attribute to *Christian charity*, the repeated invitations, nay alarming threats, which are too often used, to induce the young and unsuspecting, to “come out,” to “separate themselves,” from their relatives and friends, because those to whom they are in duty and affection bound are—not

extremely vicious, not daringly impious, not in any degree immoral, not even lukewarm in religious matters, but—"worldly," "unregenerate," "unenlightened," "unevangelical?"

Let us hear what an Apostle says of this divine grace of *love*: 'Though,' says he, in other words, 'I had all the supernatural gifts of the spirit, and "though I have *all faith* so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Charity, among other characteristics, "beareth all things," that is, concealeth the faults of others; "believeth all things" to their credit and advantage; and "hopeth all things" may eventually work together for their good.—Now how far does "*Evangelical*" resemble this "*Christian charity*," when it sows the seeds of disunion and disgust between the most intimate of friends, when it excites in the bosom of the parent, the child, the brother, or the sister, that most dreadful conflict which must be excited between nature and religion, by the conviction, that those who are nearest and dearest to them, are, perhaps, the objects of divine wrath, the unredeemed of the Lord! How terrific must be the agony of that breast, from which the most beloved relative is dragged by the unrelenting hand of death, if he die and show no sign of regeneration, no attachment to the Evangelical party—notwithstanding a lively hope of eternal happiness, spring-

ing from a conscience void of offence, and terminating in his Redeemer's merits, smooth his brow and dismiss his spirit in that peace with God "which passeth all understanding!"

What, in such a case, would true Christian charity prescribe? To believe all things, to hope all things; nay, to rest with unshaken confidence on the infallible promise of Him "who cannot lie," that, "he that hath *done good* shall go into life everlasting."

Have I supposed an exaggerated case, or one which might not very *probably* arise from the tendency of "Evangelical" Principles? Excuse the interrogatory form in which I have couched my suspicions on this head; I am unwilling to hazard a positive assertion, which may appear to convey most serious reproach, without leaving the door open to a satisfactory explanation. I fear, however, that my knowledge of circumstances, which have already passed, will warrant stronger language than that which I have used.

How, then, stands the charity of the Colchester party, with respect to those who have been connected with it, and may see cause to withdraw from the connexion? Let us put, if you please, an *imaginary* case. We will suppose a young person to have been educated strictly according to the principles of the Church of England, brought up in ha-

bits of piety and virtue, and not nominally, but actively fulfilling her religious and social duties. Sickness or other cause may for a time render the mind more than usually susceptible of strong impressions; and should the judgement be lulled asleep, the appearance of singular devotion, and the assertion of peculiar privileges, may be expected to produce a strong effect. Well,—this young person is enlisted under the banners of *Evangelism*; for some years conforms to all the exterior practices which are deemed essential requisites; and is not only most conscientiously attached to the doctrines which now seem to bear the stamp of truth, but is acknowledged by the best authority to be one of “the regenerate.” In course of time, however, some doubts arise in her mind, with regard to the validity of those *principles* which demand, to a certain degree, a sacrifice of reason, of free-agency, of natural affections; and as to the correctness of that *practice* which naturally ensues from them: these doubts lead to inquiry; inquiry, to study and meditation on the Sacred Volume, with the assistance of the best interpreters;—and conviction of error—of essential error—established upon the surest grounds, is the eventual result. This young person, we will suppose, candidly renounces, as publicly as she had embraced, the peculiar tenets of the Evangelical party. Now, Sir, I would ask in what light this conduct, candid and

ingenuous at least, would be received at Colchester, and in what terms it would be spoken of?—Would it be called “*Apostasy*,” “a desertion of Christ,” “a return to the world,” a proof of hypocrisy, or of an unregenerated state? Would it be affirmed that, unless a restoration to *the right way* was effected by divine grace, no hope could be entertained of final salvation? For the sake of argument I would suppose, that not one tittle of alteration had taken place, or was likely to do so, in any serious habit, in any active call of charity. Changed only in her belief that *all* are admitted to the same joy in Christ; that those whom she most esteems, and who are endeared to her by the most sacred ties, are “heirs together” with herself “of the grace of life:” passed only from the frequent dread of error, to the certainty of truth: feeling herself encouraged to “press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus,” by the plainest doctrines of that Church, which she has always respected, but not always understood; and by the cordial assistance of those relations and friends, from whom she had been alienated in principle, though not in heart:—Under such circumstances as these, I again ask, how would she be viewed and regarded by her late associates? Would she be considered, as conscientious, as religious still;—or would she be held up as a warning to others: would she

be pitied as a person deluded by the artifices of the great enemy of our souls; would she furnish matter for a sermon on the text, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world?" I will do no more than demand what is the fact;—what Christian charity would dictate? I here admit that I have put an *extreme* case, but not one that is *impossible*.

I unequivocally profess my firm persuasion, that such an example *would* have its due effect.

I come now, Sir, in the last place, to discuss the point in which alone I am personally concerned, and that only in my professional capacity as a clergyman of the Church of England.

That some "defect of Christian charity" is visible in the mode in which the most distinguished and exemplary characters among the clergy are estimated, I do not feel any difficulty in averring. We need not go beyond the boundaries of our own diocese for instances of the most eminent piety and holiness of life, being united to the most amiable and useful qualities, in persons of all ranks in our ecclesiastical Establishment. This is not denied—*because it cannot*;—but it is said, that even the least questionable, as one would think, of these very men, whose character even the tongue of calumny has never dared to blast, are "worldly," are not Christians "vitally," are no nearer heaven than their deluded flocks, are, in short, not "Evangelical."

Proh pudor! that man, short-sighted man, should assume the attribute of Omniscience; and forgetting the charge, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” decide upon the spiritual condition of an immortal soul! Is *this* Christian charity? Is *this* brotherly love?

I have made use, you will observe, of the term “Evangelical” as a quotation, throughout this letter. It has been denied that the denomination was ever really assumed by those, who profess the principles to which I have alluded; but I have ample authority to prove that it is unhesitatingly assumed in Colchester; and my observations are not intended to be applied to any other place, unless they should be deemed more generally applicable.

On the use, or, if I have been right, on the abuse of this term much more depends than at first appears.

The word EVANGELICAL, *belonging to, or consistent with, the Gospel*, carries conviction in its very sound; and if, on the one hand, but comparatively very few ministers of Christ within the pale of our Church, be pronounced to be deserving of it; and on the other, we assert that the very grounds on which the distinction rests, are any thing but really evangelical, it is obvious the question at issue is of some importance, as it respects both our hearers and ourselves. The denomination has, however, been adopted; and it were useless to cavil

about words. It becomes, nevertheless, a more serious question with regard to the *fact*, whether the regular clergy do, or do not *preach the Gospel*, that is, whether they be, or be not perjured in the sight of God, and despicable in the eyes of man. The charge brought against us is, prudently enough, couched in general terms, and therefore will not admit of a particular confutation; but we may challenge the very bitterest of our enemies to prove, that we are deficient, as a body, in the constant inculcation of all the essential and peculiar doctrines of Christianity; in the application of them to the spiritual and moral purposes for which they were delivered; or in the promulgation of any tenets, but those which we believe to be inconsistent with the Articles and intentions of our Church, and with the tenor of Holy Writ*.

“Self-righteous” is a term moreover not unfrequently affixed to those clergy, who endeavour to “show their faith by their works.” Now, I would remark, that this word admits of two interpretations: by one, in which it is, I conceive, applied to *us*, it

* See the evidence which the press affords in the sermons of Mr. Archdeacon Pott, of the Rev. T. Bowdler, of the Rev. J. Jebb, of the Rev. Dr. Bell late of Westminster, and very many others which it would be needless to specify, but which all concur in proving to the unprejudiced, how groundless is the charge preferred against us of inattention to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity.

means, that the "self-righteous" depend for salvation on the merit of their works. Need I affirm that such imputation is a wanton calumny? Surely not. The other meaning of "self-righteous" attaches to those, who think themselves more righteous than their neighbours; who "thank God that they are not as other men are."

I have, Sir, thus brought to a conclusion the remarks which I considered it my duty to put together, upon the NATURE and TENDENCY of certain doctrines, enforced by all the weight of your public and private influence, and still more, perhaps, by the efficacy of your example. I cannot but repeat my anxious hope, that nothing may be found in the foregoing pages, which savours of presumption, of a dogmatizing spirit, or of that want of respect for the opinions of others who differ from me, which can only proceed from the most absurd of all pretensions, that of infallibility.

I have, indeed, laboured to prove, that a careful investigation of the sense of Scripture is absolutely necessary in the search after sacred truth; and in doing so, have been obliged to show, that you have not always applied the texts of Scripture as, I conceive, was warranted by the context. Since your doctrine of "Nonconformity to the World" depended entirely upon the scriptural meaning of the terms; if I was successful in adducing authority

that you had misinterpreted those terms, the doctrine, in your acceptation, though not in the true one, must be relinquished as untenable.

On the subject of Regeneration, as connected with Calvinistic tenets, I have not ventured to advance a step, well knowing the slippery nature of the ground, without the support of those from whom we ought always to seek it, the reformers of our Church, and the best writers in it. In expressing my opinion of Calvinistic principles, I have, perhaps, spoken decidedly; but I would wish it to be understood, that although I could not, feeling as I do, continue in communion with the Church if I were attached to these principles—yet that I admire the mildness and moderation with which our Articles have been drawn up; so as to admit of considerable latitude in the particular application of certain doctrines, to our general belief in which, we are bound, on admission to Holy Orders, to subscribe without cavil or mental reservation.

My main object has been to represent the *effects* of those religious principles which have caused, to my certain knowledge, a great deal of pain and misery in Colchester and its neighbourhood. Those who have experienced slavery, can best estimate the gift of freedom; but that a heart released from the burthen of excessive and unnatural religious senti-

ments, feels as if it had thrown off "a load of chains," I can and do most solemnly attest.

Let me then entreat those who may still wish to be guided by reason as well as feeling, to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest," the passages of Scripture which might at first sight induce them to embrace principles tending to consequences which they *cannot* approve. Let them, if they hesitate to follow, with implicit confidence, the wise and good men, who have laid down their lives for the truth's sake, as it is set forth in the formularies of our venerable Church,—let them be careful in choosing their spiritual guides; and let them remember that a sound education is an absolute requisite in the qualification of a Christian minister.

In these recommendations I trust I shall have your full concurrence, and for the whole of my remarks, your lenient judgement, being, Sir, with every feeling of personal respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

E. J. BURROW.

Euston Square, London,
January 27, 1819.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE CALVINISTIC ARTICLES,

Usually denominated "THE LAMBETH ARTICLES," proposed in 1595, and immediately afterwards suppressed.

1. God from eternity hath predestinated certain men unto life; certain men he hath reprobated.

2. The moving or efficient cause of predestination unto life, is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or of any thing that is in the person predestinated, but only the good-will and pleasure of God.

3. There is predetermined a certain number of the predestinate, which can neither be augmented, nor diminished.

4. Those who are not predestined to salvation, shall be necessarily damned for their sins.

5. A true living and justifying faith, and the spirit of God justifying, is not extinguished, falleth not away, it vanisheth not away in the elect, either totally, or finally.

6. A man truly faithful, that is such a one who is endued with a justifying faith, is certain, with the full assurance of faith, of the remission of his sins, and of his everlasting salvation by Christ.

7. Saving grace is not given, is not granted, is not communicated to all men, by which they may be saved if they will.

8. No man can come unto Christ, unless it be given unto him, and unless the Father shall draw him; and all men are not drawn by the Father, that they may come to the Son.

9. It is not in the will or power of every one to be saved.

A Summary, by DAN. TILLENUS, of the

ARTICLES OF THE SYNOD OF DORT,

"Which is to be conceived to have delivered the genuine sense of all the parties, as being a representative of all the Calvinian

Churches of Europe, (except those of France,) some few Divines of England being added to them."

ART. I. *Of Divine Predestination.*

That God, by an absolute decree, hath elected to salvation a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith or obedience whatsoever; and secluded from saving grace all the rest of mankind, and appointed them, by the same decree, to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity or impenitency.

ART. II. *Of the Merit and Effect of Christ's Death.*

That Jesus Christ hath not suffered death for any other, but for those elect only; having neither had any intent nor commandment of his Father, to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

ART. III. *Of Man's Will in the State of Nature.*

That by Adam's fall his posterity lost their free-will, being put to an unavoidable necessity to do, or not to do, whatsoever they do, or do not, whether it be good or evil, being thereunto predestinated by the eternal and effectual secret decree of God.

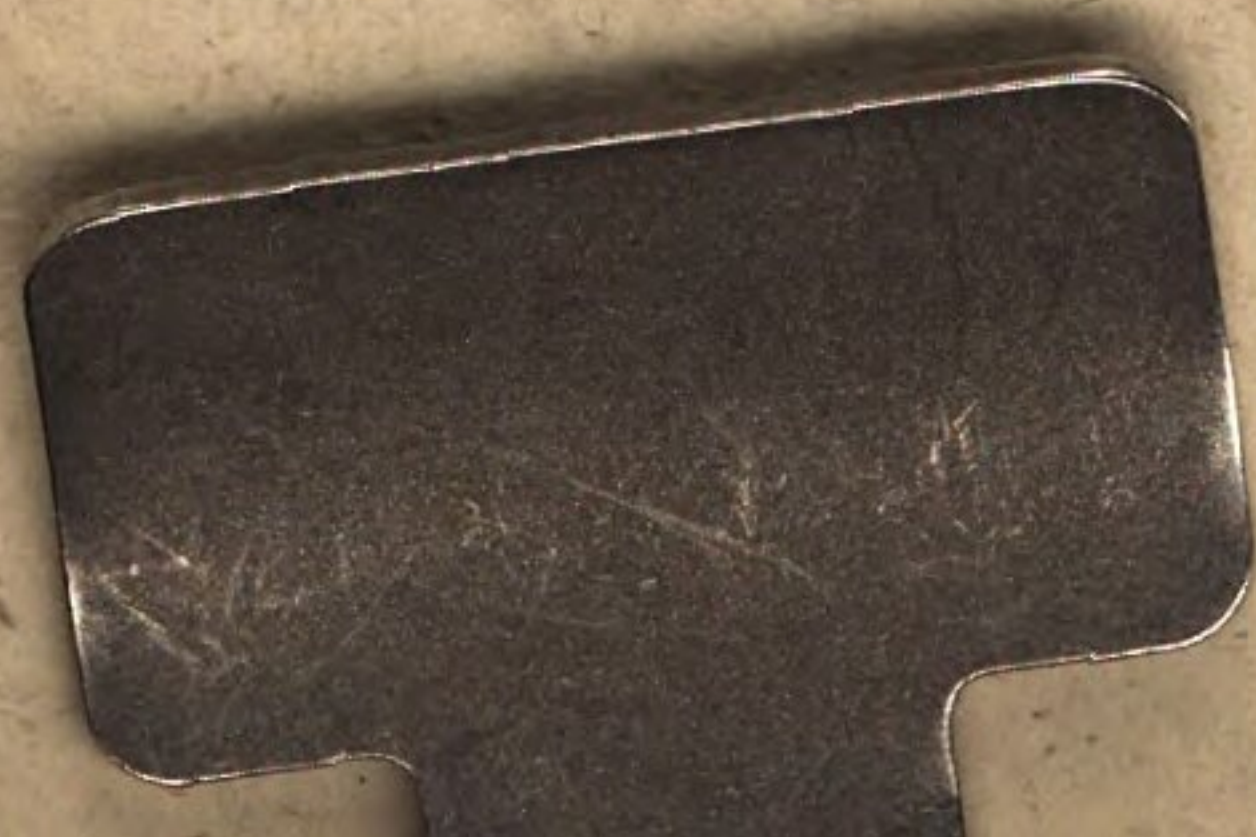
ART. IV. *Of the Manner of Conversion.*

That God, to save his elect from the corrupt mass, doth beget faith in them by a power equal to that whereby he created the world, and raised up the dead; insomuch that such, unto whom he gives that grace, cannot reject it; and the rest, being reprobate, cannot accept it.

ART. V. *On the Certainty of Perseverance.*

That such as have once received that grace by faith, can never fall from it finally or totally, notwithstanding the most enormous sins they can commit.

THE END.



Burrow, Edward J.

A letter addressed to the Rev. William Marsh, vicar of St. Peter,
Colchester ... of certains relig. principles ...

London 1819

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